

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 81/NO. 33 SEPTEMBER 11, 2017

## SWP builds protests, takes discussion to working class

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Socialist Workers Party members and supporters have been joining marches against racism in cities across the country and discussing with workers and youth at these actions and taking the discussion more

### DEEPER INTO THE WORKING CLASS

broadly to the working class, going door to door in neighborhoods across the country.

They also discussed President Donald Trump's announcement Aug. 21 that Washington will send thousands more young soldiers to continue the U.S. rulers' 16-year-long war in Afghanistan — the longest in U.S. history.

In Berkeley, California, SWP member Joel Britton set up a display of party literature near where a few thousand anti-racist protesters were rallying.

"I showed people *Malcolm X*, *Black Liberation*, and *the Road to Workers Power* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes, the *Militant* and other

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## Socialist Workers Party: 'Protest racist attacks!'



Above, Reuters/Elijah Nouvelage. Inset, AP/Josh Edelson  
Above, Aug. 26 San Francisco anti-racist protest drew some 6,000 participants. Inset, antifa thugs in Berkeley Aug. 27, like those at far right, attacked supporters of President Donald Trump who came to debate and discuss with protesters.

### SWP: 'Join debate on how to fight effectively'

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

OAKLAND, Calif. — Seventy-five people attended a public meeting here Aug. 26 sponsored by the Socialist Workers Party, many of whom had joined in anti-racist protests in San Francisco a few hours earlier.

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### Liberals, 'antifa' combine to deal blows to political rights

BY NORTON SANDLER

BERKELEY, Calif. — A crowd of 4,000 gathered in Berkeley's Martin Luther King Jr. Civic Center Park Aug. 27, the culmination of a week-end of protests against racism in the San Francisco Bay Area. The previous day 6,000 marched through the streets of San Francisco, gathering at three separate locations.

Members and supporters of the Socialist Workers Party joined in both actions, asking workers to join with them in speaking out against racist attacks and discussing and debating how to build this fight among working people.

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## Social crisis in Texas is product of capitalism

BY SETH GALINSKY

The social catastrophe for working people and farmers unfolding in Texas in the wake of Hurricane Harvey is first and foremost the consequence of capitalism and its insatiable drive for profits at all costs.

Despite knowing for at least two

### DISASTER SHOWS NEED FOR WORKERS POWER

— SWP statement page 9

days that a major storm packing torrential rains would hit land Aug. 25 in the Houston area, local, state and federal government officials did next to nothing to either organize a disciplined evacuation or get food and other necessities to people if told to "shelter in place." Millions were left to just fend for themselves.

Government officials gave conflicting "advice" to residents of Houston, the fourth largest city in the country, with some 2.3 million residents, or others in the region. Evacuate, don't evacuate. Call 911, don't call — unless you're in "immediate danger." With lines overloaded, thousands of people couldn't get through.

This refusal of officials to plan or take responsibility for a serious response and the ruling class's disdain for working people were captured in the photo of senior citizens at the La Vita Bella assisted living home in Dickinson, with water up to their waists, waiting for help.

Officials told the home's owner the night before not to evacuate, WTVR

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## White House sends more soldiers for US rulers' war in Afghanistan



U.S. Marines with howitzer in Afghanistan, June 10. Washington's war to enter 17th year.

BY JIM BRADLEY

Washington's military intervention in Afghanistan — the 16-year-long war already the longest in U.S. history — will continue indefinitely under President Donald Trump's "new strategy," which includes sending several thousand additional troops. He announced this Aug. 21 in a nationally

televised speech before troops assembled at Fort Myer, Virginia.

The decision flows from the effort of the U.S. propertied rulers to defend their political and economic interests in the Middle East and South Asia as the post-World War II imperialist order continues to fray.

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## Bosses seek to boost profits with robots, slash size of working class

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The business press and liberal dailies have been featuring articles arguing that robots are increasingly replacing workers in the U.S. They hope that this will be a way to squeeze out more profits. And a sizable section of the capitalists' machinery of rule — the meritocratic middle-class layers that staff the rulers' nonprofits, nongovernment organizations, college faculties, and government regulatory agencies — fervently hope robots will entirely eliminate the working class, who they consider reactionary, backward beings responsible for the election of Donald Trump to the presidency.

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Chicago auto mechanics strike dealerships for higher pay



# Culture, freedom of art and the world capitalist crisis

BY DAVE PRINCE

The brutal realities of the world capitalist crisis are affecting artists — poets, writers, painters, sculptors and musicians. In a world where the dictatorship of capital threatens all culture and the future of humanity — and with the inevitable struggles of the working class to change that reality — the impact on artists will grow.

## COMMENTARY

It is a development welcomed by the Socialist Workers Party.

The decision taken in May by the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis to cancel the exhibition of “Scaffold,” a sculpture by Sam Durant, is one of the recent examples of restrictions on artistic creation that are against the interests of working people.

Restrictions and conditions on artistic creation, closing down exhibitions and attacks on artists for so-called “cultural appropriation” have *nothing* do to with the fight against exploitation and oppression, in fact they undermine the fight.

The cancellation of the exhibition, widely reported in the Twin Cities area and nationally, was announced after a closed meeting of representatives of the art center, Dakota Sioux Elders, and the artist, who gave the rights to his sculpture to the Elders. The sculpture, created by Durant in 2012, had been exhibited internationally, including in The Hague, Netherlands; Edinburgh, Scotland; and Kas-

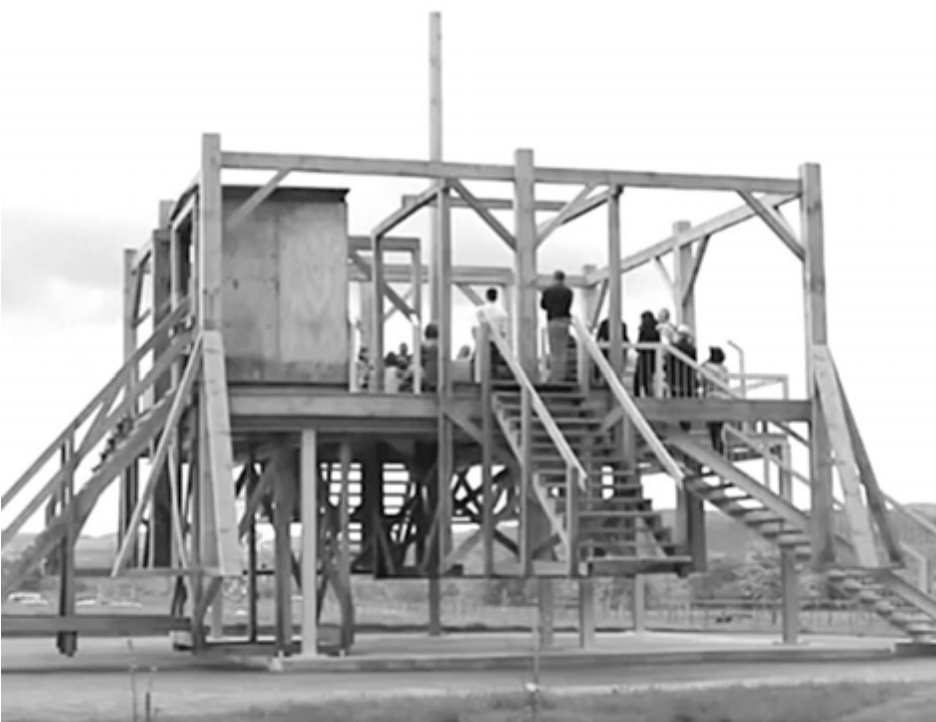
sel, Germany.

The decision was a destructive one, including asking for, and getting, the agreement of the artist not only to take down the exhibit, but to never recreate it anywhere.

The Dakota Elders had the sculpture dismantled and destroyed. They argued that since the artist is not a Native American he could not understand the traumatic impact on Dakotas of a representation of the gallows used by the U.S. government to execute 38 Dakota men in Mankato, Minnesota, in 1862 — the largest government execution in U.S. history.

The Mankato gallows was one of seven that comprised the “Scaffold” sculpture by Durant, including ones that represent the gallows used for the execution of abolitionist John Brown in 1859, of the four working-class martyrs framed up for the 1886 bombing in Chicago’s Haymarket Square and others.

The action of the Art Center and Dakota Elders shut down a voice and closed off what should have been a welcome discussion and debate sparked by the sculpture. The justification for destroying the sculpture discounts the moral standing the struggles of Native Americans have won in the eyes of the working class, as a living reminder of the consequences of 400 years of U.S. expansion and genocide against the Native American peoples. Their justification separates this history of struggle and abysmal conditions into which Native Americans have been driven, from



“Scaffold” sculpture by Sam Durant, during exhibition in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 2014. The artwork portrays seven gallows used by the U.S. government for the execution of 38 Dakota men in Mankato, Minnesota, in 1862; abolitionist John Brown in 1859; the four working-class martyrs framed up in 1886 for a bombing in Chicago’s Haymarket Square; and others.

the brutal realities of the capitalist crisis faced by tens of millions of working people every day.

The reality of that carnage is at heart a cultural one, not economic. What is at stake in ending it is the future of humanity.

The liberals and petty bourgeois radicals who championed the decision to destroy the “Scaffold” can-

not understand that the salvation of a culture that can become international and human lies in the hands of a mass working-class vanguard. They will open the door to advancing human culture in practice through the toilers conquering state power.

The Socialist Workers Party stands for freedom for art as an integral part of this fight.

## For further reading . . .



*“Truly intellectual creation is incompatible with lies, hypocrisy and the spirit of conformity. Art can become a strong ally of revolution only insofar as it remains faithful to itself.”*

Leon Trotsky, 1938

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Reuters/Claudia Dautt

Fidel Castro at 2006 May Day in Havana.

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# SWP builds anti-racist protests, deepens discussion with workers



Gerardo Sánchez shows *Militant* to participant in anti-racist rally in San Francisco Aug. 26. Militant/Deborah Liatos

Continued from front page books by party leaders,” said Britton, who sold three of the *Workers Power* books in an hour. Among those buying the book was a woman originally from Vietnam, Britton said, “who was intrigued by photos about Malcolm’s opposition to the U.S. imperialist war there and by GIs opposed to the war. He added, “I also bumped into an older Iranian man who told me he already had the book in Farsi.” Twenty copies of the book were sold overall, at this action and another the day before in San Francisco.

“An important part of the discussion was explaining the SWP’s working-class course in contrast to antifa thuggery, how that’s a danger to the working class,” said Britton. This group attacked conservatives, Trump supporters and others they deemed to be “fascist” who were in the park where the protest took place. (See article on page 6.)

“The cops pulled back and allowed some antifas into the park, carrying long thick clubs with small green ecology flags attached to the top — clearly prepared for using the clubs,” said SWP member Dennis Richter, who was part of a table in the Martin Luther King Jr. Civic Center Park in Berkeley where the rally took place. It became a center for discussion and debate on what was going on.

Richter and other protesters intervened after seeing some of these thugs beating up a man at the action and helped force them to back off.

At the SWP table, he had a discussion with a member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, who had purchased a *Militant* in San Francisco at an anti-racist protest the day before and said he supported the actions of the antifas.

“There is no serious threat of fascism today,” Richter said. He described how the SWP, which was centrally involved in Teamsters union organizing battles in Minnesota in the 1930s and over-the-road organizing efforts across the Midwest, responded when there were serious threats to workers from company goons and ultrarightist outfits. Mass labor action, accompanied by organized and disciplined union defense squads, were key — not small groups of self-appointed thugs.

Richter explained how thuggish actions by antifas give city governments and their police forces openings to close down space for workers to organize and conduct further actions against police killings and racism. “I didn’t convince him but he listened,” Richter said.

In Augusta, Georgia, more than 200 people participated in a rally Aug. 24 demanding a memorial to the Confederacy that was erected in 1877 be taken down. The action was organized by the Augusta NAACP. “I came to this rally to learn about this issue,” college student Twyla Wallace told Lisa Potash, SWP candidate for Atlanta mayor, at the action, as she got a copy of the *Militant*.

At a rally against racism attended by a few thousand people in Seattle Aug. 26, Tanner Osborn, 17, a student at Everett Community College was attracted to the Socialist Workers Party members there and their literature. “I was a bit surprised to see all these revolutionary books,” he said. Osborn purchased a *Militant* subscription and a copy of *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?* by SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters.

Along with the book *Workers Pow-*

*er* book and the one by Waters, SWP members and supporters are also introducing workers to *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?* and *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record*, both by Barnes.

Farmworkers in Washington state recently went on strike following the death of a farmworker who was denied medical treatment by the bosses, Mary Martin told the *Militant*. “Members of the SWP went to support them and told them about the silver miners’ strike against Hecla Mining bosses in Idaho, where the main issue is union control of safety and working conditions,” she said.

“The farmworkers made a solidarity video in Spanish. They sent it to the ‘mineros’ and the Idaho miners posted it on their website,” she said. “One veteran miner posted a response, saying, ‘I don’t speak Spanish but I understood every word. Good luck to you brothers in your struggle.’”

### ‘Want to see what you’re saying’

In Colorado, SWP members have been discussing these questions going door to door in working-class neighborhoods in Denver, Aurora and Pueblo. “I want to see what you are saying about the world instead of the talking heads on TV,” Chris Kettle, who recently got a *Militant* subscription, told SWP member Diana Newberry after she knocked on his door. He said that “a lot more people are talking about socialism because of Bernie Sanders.”

“Bernie Sanders believes that the system can be reformed,” Newberry said. “We believe that it is the capitalist system that is the problem and the working class needs to take political power so we can build a society based on human solidarity, not dog-eat-dog capitalist exploitation for private profit.”

In Pueblo, a truck driver told SWP



Militant/Eric Simpson  
Socialist Workers Party member Dennis Richter addressing SWP-sponsored meeting Aug. 26 in Oakland. Over weekend, party members and supporters joined anti-racist actions in San Francisco and Berkeley. Richter and other participants in the Berkeley action helped back off antifa thugs, winning freedom for man they were beating.

member Alyson Kennedy that he voted for President Trump because “he says what he thinks and may be able to do something about these problems.”

“Working people are fed up with the Democratic and Republican parties because they do nothing for us,” said Kennedy. “The SWP is totally different. We are a working-class party that has a revolutionary perspective of building a workers movement that can take political power.”

“That will never happen,” the truck driver said, “because we are being replaced by robots.”

“Yes, the bosses try to use technology to squeeze more production out of us. But they haven’t and can’t replace the working class,” Kennedy said. “The meritocratic layers who honeycomb the government and associated nongovernment organizations and colleges wish we could be replaced, because they increasingly fear the deepening class struggle they see coming down the pike. And it *is* coming. The working class will have its day.”

Leaders of the Socialist Workers Party, along with the *Militant*, are putting together proposals for a fall campaign to step up party campaigning in the working class and increase the circulation of the paper and the set of campaign books. Stay tuned.

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# Jury finds supporters of Cliven Bundy ‘not guilty’

BY JOEL BRITTON

A jury in Las Vegas, Nevada, Aug. 22 refused to find Richard Lovelien, Steven Stewart, Scott Drexler and Eric Parker guilty on frame-up charges stemming from a 2014 protest of ranchers and supporters on Cliven Bundy’s family ranch near Bunkerville, Nevada. The four were among participants demanding release of 400 of Bundy’s cattle that had been seized by the Bureau of Land Management in a dispute over grazing rights on federal lands.

Bundy, his sons Ammon and Ryan, and others have been imprisoned without trial on related charges since February 2016. Government officials had hoped to win convictions here to set a precedent to use against their main targets.

But this was the second time the prosecution put the four on trial and failed to get a jury to convict them. Charges included “assault on a federal officer,” “conspiracy to commit an offense against the United States,” and “interstate travel in aid of extortion.” A mistrial had been declared in an earlier trial in April when that jury couldn’t reach a unanimous verdict for acquittal.

After four days of jury deliberations, Lovelien and Stewart were found not guilty on all 10 charges they faced. The 12-person jury also ruled Drexler and Parker not guilty on most of the same charges. The jurors said they were not able to reach a verdict on four of the charges against Parker and two against Drexler.

“The jury was 11 to one for ‘not guilty’ on the last four charges,” Shawna Cox told the *Militant* in a phone interview Aug. 28. She is a supporter of ranchers’ rights to graze cattle on federal lands and participated in protests last year at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon.

The new verdicts “stunned a courtroom full of the defendants’ supporters, many of whom broke into applause after Chief U.S. District Judge Gloria Navarro ordered Lovelien and Stewart freed immediately,” The Associated Press reported.

“What we have here is a win,” Parker’s wife Andrea told supporters and the media outside the courtroom.

“The acquittal was really terrific because the jurors were able to see how tyrannical the judge was,” Cox, who lives in Kanab, Utah, told the *Militant*.

Judge Navarro made every effort to hamstring the defense in the recent trial. She barred defense attorneys “from referencing constitutional rights to freely assemble and to bear arms” and “from mentioning alleged misconduct or excessive force by law enforcement” during the Bundy ranch protest in 2014.

In addition, the judge denied the defense the right to present five witnesses they called to testify on their behalf.

In protest of the rigged proceedings, defense attorneys waived closing arguments.

The day after the verdicts, Acting District Attorney Steven Myhre announced that he will prosecute Drexler and Parker for yet a third time on the charges the jury didn’t reach a verdict on. “There is no justice system here, it’s all a railroad job,” said Cox.

Drexler and Parker were released from jail by Navarro, where — like the Bundys, Lovelien, Stewart and the other defendants — they have been held for the past 18 months. But Las Vegas



AP/Michael Quine

Cliven Bundy’s daughter, Bailey Bundy Logue, left, and Margaret Houston of Logandale, Nevada, in front of Las Vegas courthouse Aug. 22 after four supporters of Cliven Bundy were freed. They were found not guilty on almost all frame-up charges from 2014 ranchers’ fight.

TV station KSNV said the two “will be monitored by a federal officer” and “aren’t allowed to be around any firearms or other dangerous weapons, and they aren’t allowed to have contact with any of the case’s named victims or witnesses, just to name a few.”

The third trial against Drexler and Parker was set for Sept. 25, which will push back even further the trials of Cliven Bundy and the other defendants.

Dennis Richter and Bernie Senter contributed to this article.

## Bosses seek to boost profits with robots, slash workers

Continued from front page

“Robots Could Take Over 38% of U.S. Jobs Within About 15 years,” headlined a *Los Angeles Times* article. While Harvard economics professor Richard Freeman wrote in an article titled “Who Owns the Robots Rules the World,” predicting, “In the not-so-distant future: your job may no longer be performed by a human. The software will be in charge.”

However, the idea that robotization can replace human labor or solve the crisis of capitalism is “a reactionary fantasy,” explains a resolution adopted by the 1988 Socialist Workers Party convention reprinted in *New International* no. 10.

“Large-scale ‘robotization’ of industry under capitalism could only occur as a product of a devastating onslaught by the employers on the conditions of the working class,” the resolution states. “It would serve not to lessen the overwork of the toilers but to intensify exploitation to the greatest possible degree. Living labor alone creates the mass of surplus value from which profits are derived, and the capitalists seek to use every advance in science and technology to extract more and more labor time from the brain and muscle of the producers.

“Moreover, there is an irresolvable contradiction between enormous chronic unemployment and devastated living standards of the working population that must inevitably accompany ‘robotization’ under capitalism,” it says, “and the exploiters’ inability to realize profits unless they can find buyers for the massively expanded quantities of commodities that automated production would entail.”

And the cost of robots and their maintenance increases the bosses’ spending on constant capital, which, “without an increase in productive capacity and, above all, without the hiring of more workers to produce more surplus value — ends up reinforcing the falling rate of profit.”

“Productivity-enhancing machines will not enhance productivity if they are not given to workers to use,” the *Financial Times* wrote recently.

As capitalist production, trade and employment have been falling for years during today’s ongoing capitalist crisis, the boss class is stepping up attempts to stanch their crisis through deepening attacks on wages and social benefits won by working people. Part of this has been increased use of robots.

But profit rates continue to decline, as they’ve been doing for decades. And the ruling capitalist families have held back from investing in new factories and capacity-expanding equipment to increase employment. Instead, they’ve turned their profit-seeking investments into speculation on stocks, bonds, derivatives and a massive array of other forms of commercial paper in search of higher returns.

At the same time the capitalists are driving hard against those employed in industry. Manufacturing employment has declined by 5 million since 2000 — 30 percent of the workforce — while the capitalists have accomplished a doubling of output per worker through speedup and disregard for safety. Real wages for production workers haven’t risen in over 40 years.

Still, productive stagnation has meant millions of workers have dropped out

of the labor market. The active working class has shrunk.

The working class faces a disaster from the bosses’ crisis and resulting attacks. Life expectancy is down, marriages and birth rates are down, and opioid addiction — and resulting overdoses and deaths — are spiraling up.

The large meritocratic liberal layer in bourgeois society despises the working class. To them robotization along with accompanying social ills rooted in the crisis of capitalism that shrinks the numbers of workers is progress. They dream of a day when all transportation is driverless, factories and restaurants robotified. But for these layers, it’s taking too long. They fear the workers responding to the deepening crisis with deepening class struggle, posing a deadly danger for the ruling class and its educated elite.

But this pipedream of eliminating the working class through robots is also a reactionary fantasy. There is widespread discussion among working people about the causes of the capitalist crisis and the indifference of Democrats and Republicans alike to the carnage it wreaks. And the Socialist Workers Party is getting the best response on workers’ doorsteps in decades.

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# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

## Toronto airport strikers vote down second contract

TORONTO — Members of Teamsters Local 419 employed by Swissport at the airport here — 700 baggage handlers, and cabin and ground crews — went on strike July 28 after rejecting a contract that would impose a three-year wage freeze, cut benefits and give the company the right to change schedules with short notice. Strikers on the picket line told the *Militant* they are also fighting against a lack of respect on the job. They have rejected two company concession contracts, the second by 98 percent. “Right now we bid on our schedules every six to eight weeks,” said striker Burton Daley, who has worked at Swissport for nearly five years. Under the proposed contract, “They have the right with 96 hours notice to move you out of the schedule you bid for.”

Daley works four 10-hour shifts per week. He said the company is hoping to change schedules to six days on and three days off.

Swissport, which operates at 104 airports worldwide, services over 30 airlines at Toronto’s Pearson Airport. In preparation for a strike, the company hired 250 temporary workers in May.

Pickets are up at several employee parking lots, most of them around-the-clock.

— Susan Berman

## Chicago auto mechanics strike dealerships for higher pay

CHICAGO — “The car dealers want to keep the eight-year apprenticeship, we want four years,” said 21-year-old Giovanni Fernandez on the strike picket line outside the Chrysler Dodge dealer on Western Avenue here. Some 2,000 members of Auto Mechanics Union Local 701 have been on strike at car dealerships in the area since Aug. 1. Fernandez has worked at the Chrysler Dodge facility for one year.

In addition to higher apprentice wages, the union is demanding a guaranteed 40-hour workweek and better schedules. Workers are currently required to be on the clock for 40 hours a week, but are only guaranteed 34 hours’ pay, depending on the jobs they are assigned.

“The eight-year apprenticeship keeps us stuck at lower pay,” said Fernandez, noting that journeymen mechanics are backing their fight for a wage raise.

“Another issue is that semiskilled workers who are mechanics’ helpers can last forever in that job classification,” Fernandez said. “We want it abolished.”

Many young workers have thousands of dollars in debts to technical schools for certifications that they need to get hired, but are only paid minimum wage or a little more.

Many dealerships have closed their

service departments, but at Cadillac of Naperville management has hired a couple of replacement workers and tried to intimidate strikers with letters of termination.

“I got a letter saying I’ve been permanently replaced,” one mechanic, who asked that his name not be used, told the *Militant* Aug. 28. “Four of the 12 service workers got the termination letter, with no reason given.”

Shortly after the strike began the company demanded that workers remove their toolboxes.

Despite this “no union member has crossed the picket line here,” the striker said. Over 100 strikers from various dealerships rallied outside Cadillac of Naperville Aug. 23 in solidarity.

— Dan Fein



Militant/Dan Fein

Some 2,000 members of Auto Mechanics Union began strike at Chicago car dealerships Aug. 1 to demand higher wages, 40-hour workweek. Above, pickets at Western Ave. Chrysler Dodge.

## October ‘Che’ Cuba brigade less than 4 weeks away!

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

In less than four weeks, workers and youth from around the world will arrive in Cuba for the Oct. 1-15 “In the Footsteps of Che” International Brigade. “As of today, we have 74 participants from the U.S.,” Bob Guild, vice president of Marazul, which is organizing travel for the brigade, told the *Militant*.

“I believe the U.S. contingent will be the largest on the brigade and this is very exciting because the U.S. has had almost no one on previous ‘In the Footsteps of Che’ brigades,” Guild said. In the past Washington imposed restrictions making it difficult for U.S. residents to travel to Cuba to see the revolution firsthand. Some obstacles to travel have been loosened in the last couple of years.

The “In the Footsteps of Che” brigade will commemorate the 50th anniversary of Ernesto Che Guevara’s death in combat. Argentine-born Guevara, a central leader of the Cuban Revolution, had gone to Bolivia in 1966, where he led revolutionaries from Cuba, Bolivia and Peru who fought to overthrow the U.S.-backed military dictatorship there. He was killed in October 1967 by the CIA and officers of the Bolivian military regime.

“The crisis throughout our own country has tremendously increased the interest in socialism especially among younger people,” Guild said. Even though the space for U.S. par-

ticipation is filled, “it is still possible to sign up and at least get on a waiting list!”

Members of the U.S. delegation will be coming from across the country, from New York to California. They will meet and discuss with workers, farmers and youth in Cuba as well as veteran revolutionaries who fought side by side with Che Guevara during the struggle in Cuba and on internationalist missions in Africa and Latin America.

“Last year I took a class on the Cuban Revolution and became a supporter of the revolution,” Ash Eberle, 20, a political science student at the University of Minnesota, told the *Militant* by phone Aug. 29. “I am going on the brigade to see for myself and to learn about Che’s legacy.”

“There are four people going from Minneapolis and when we get back we’ll be explaining what we learned,” Eberle said. “One of my professors asked me to make a presentation about the brigade in his class on Latin America. Cuba shows a revolution is possible. It is a living example. They have a sharing ethic in their hurricane disaster relief, which is important with what is going on in Houston. Cuba evacuates everyone and Cubans open their homes to people. No one is left to fend for themselves and they organize a quick rebuilding process. New Orleans still hasn’t recovered.”

Fundraising is being organized in

many cities to make it possible for brigadistas to go to Cuba in October. At their second fundraising event, the Chicago Cuba Coalition showed the documentary “Cuba, An African Odyssey.” The film describes internationalist missions in which hundreds of thousands of Cuban volunteers gave decisive aid to anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggles in Africa.

The film also shows Che Guevara during a 1964-65 three-month tour of Africa. He met with anti-colonial fighters and laid the groundwork for Cuba’s internationalist missions in the Congo, Congo-Brazzaville, Guinea-Bissau, and Angola. Twenty-two people attended the film showing at the Workers Unite Union Hall, giving donations that pushed the travel fund over \$1,500.

To get involved in building the brigade, contact the Chicago Cuba Coalition at (312) 952-2618 or ICanGoToCuba@gmail.com.

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## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



September 11, 1992

LORDSTOWN, Ohio — Some 2,400 members of the United Automobile Workers Local 1714 went on strike August 27 against the General Motors Corporation metal fabrications plant here.

UAW members put up picket lines over job security, outsourcing, and health and safety issues. This is the first strike by the union local since 1975. Workers on the picket line were upbeat. The Lordstown plant makes key components needed at other GM operations.

An August 28 *Wall Street Journal* article characterized the strike as “the first blow in what’s expected to be a bruising battle over job security between the auto maker and the United Auto Workers union.”



September 11, 1967

The Soviet bureaucrats have sentenced another writer to jail, thus violating their own dictum that the 50th year of the Russian Revolution should present an unruffled exterior to the outside world.

They have [sentenced] a young writer, 25-year-old Vladimir Bukovsky, to three years in jail.

The intensifying conflict between intellectuals and *apparatchiks* reflects in an unclear and distorted way the aspirations of the Soviet working masses for proletarian democracy, an end to privileges for bureaucrats, an end to arbitrary treatment for workers. It is an augury of much deeper, more significant social conflicts to come.



September 12, 1942

The Negro March-on-Washington movement will hold a national conference in Detroit on Sept. 26-27 to decide if and when a march to the nation’s capital will be held.

A. Philip Randolph, national director of the movement, announced that President Roosevelt had refused to meet with Randolph and a number of other prominent Negro leaders to discuss racial discrimination and attacks on Negro rights.

While Roosevelt is very well aware of present conditions and the Negro people’s protests against continued discrimination and growing Jim Crow terrorism, his autocratic refusal to meet with Randolph indicates that he has no intention of doing anything about them.

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# SWP: Join anti-racist protests!

## Continued from front page

The meeting was part of a special weekend hosted by the SWP that included participating in actions against racist attacks in San Francisco and in Berkeley the next day.

Two dozen party members and supporters were in Oakland from around the country to take part in a meeting of the party's Walmart trade union fraction.

The featured speaker was Dennis Richter, a member of the SWP's National Committee and organizer of the SWP branch in Los Angeles. Also speaking was Mary Martin, SWP candidate for mayor of Seattle and a participant in the fraction meeting.

"We were out in the streets today. We debated and discussed, found agreement and disagreements, as we stood with the anti-racist protesters," said Richter. "We introduced them to books by Jack Barnes and Mary-Alice Waters, leaders of the Socialist Workers Party, and to the *Militant* newspaper. We sold 20 copies of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Barnes, which is the best explanation of the struggles of the working class, the roots of racism and the history of the Black nationality."

Richter noted that President Donald Trump had given a pardon the previous day to the hated and recently convicted former Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio in Arizona.

There is no rise in anti-immigrant sentiment in the U.S. working class, said Richter. Arpaio is disliked widely for his anti-immigrant attacks and abuse, particularly directed at Latinos. He is infamous for incarcerating arrested immigrants in tents in the sweltering Arizona desert.

Richter said several participants had argued with him at the protest earlier that racism is on the rise among working people. "I pointed out that over 200 working-class counties that Barack Obama won in the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections went for Donald Trump in the last election," Richter said. "Did those workers just become racist? I don't think so. There were a total of 500 racists who joined a national march in Charlottesville, Virginia. That's the best they could do."

Richter pointed to the 40,000 people who turned out to march against racism in Boston a week earlier, responding to the events in Charlottesville. This was a serious protest, he said, describing how it was in continuity with the mid-1970s battles that took place in Boston to desegregate the city's schools. Richter explained that he joined marches in Boston during that struggle and the SWP was part of its leadership.

## Racism has declined sharply

The working-class mobilizations led by African-Americans that overthrew Jim Crow segregation changed things forever in U.S. politics, Richter said. Racism has declined sharply and workers have found it much easier to work and fight together.

Richter called attention to the attractive seven-panel display at the side of the room. The displays had first been used to help amplify political points in talks by Barnes, Waters and Steve Clark at the SWP's Active Workers Conference in June. They detail how the working class bears the brunt of the consequences of the world capitalist crisis, said Richter.

"Donald Trump called it carnage and he's right on that," he said. "But the ruling rich, the meritocracy and broad layers of professionals are doing quite well.



Reuters/Stephanie Keith

**More than 40,000 march toward Boston Commons Aug. 19 to protest racism following rightist actions, killing of Heather Heyer in Charlottesville, Virginia. March showed power of broad mobilization, dealt blow to effort of liberal Democrats, antifa thugs to constrict political rights.**

That is not the case for tens of millions of working people."

The fraction meeting of Walmart workers discussed how workers there need a union to lead the fight against how the bosses are foisting the crisis of their capitalist system on workers' backs. Mary Martin explained how their meeting was recessed so they could join in the anti-racist protests in

San Francisco.

"We'll do the same thing tomorrow," she said, "so we can be at the Berkeley protest."

## More U.S. troops to Afghanistan

A few days before the public meeting President Trump told the nation the government is increasing troop levels

**Continued on page 9**

# Liberals, antifa combine to deal blows to political rights

## Continued from front page

A small portion of those who assembled in Berkeley, some 200 self-proclaimed "antifa," short for anti-fascist, thugs dressed in black and wearing bandanas over their faces broke out of the crowd and carried out assaults on several of three dozen supporters of President Trump and others who had come to the park to debate with the protesters.

Cops mobilized in the hundreds by "progressive" Berkeley Mayor Jesse Arreguin retreated and did nothing to stop the attacks, only intervening after some individuals had been beaten.

It was clear this was the plan of the liberal government in Berkeley all along. "We made a strategic decision to move officers," police spokeswoman Jennifer Coats told the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

The Bay Area demonstrations came on the heels of the mobilizations against racism in Charlottesville, Virginia, and a big action of 40,000 in Boston Aug. 19 to speak out against racism. The Bay Area actions were called to counter two other rallies called for the weekend. In San Francisco a conservative group called Patriot Prayer organized by Joey Gibson from Portland, Oregon, announced they were going to hold a rally in Crissy Field Park.

In Berkeley, Amber Cummings, a transgender supporter of President Trump, called a "No to Marxism in America" rally, targeting the anti-free speech actions of antifa forces. Both organizers stated that they are not racists and did not want support for their actions from neo-Nazi's or other white supremacists.

Liberal Democratic Party politicians on both sides of the Bay and several members of Congress, including Democratic House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein, mounted a campaign calling for the conservative actions to be shut down. The *Chronicle* and other media outlets in the Bay Area joined in, playing up the threat of violence. Berkeley officials denied Cummings a rally permit.

In the midst of the violence-baiting attacks on them, and antifa threats of physical attacks, both Gibson and Cummings called off their events. Gibson then announced a press conference for Alamo Square Park.

Early on Saturday he canceled his press conference. In spite of this, 3,000 people came to the park. But overnight the cops had fenced it in and a cordon of hundreds of them stood inside the fence. Initially the cops prevented many who wanted to protest from being able to enter from adjacent streets. As the crowd grew at several intersections, the cops opened the streets and the anti-racist protesters gathered and listened to speakers.

Many in the crowd on both days carried homemade signs denouncing racism, "hate," and white supremacy. Impacted by extensive media coverage of racists demonstrating in Charlottesville, some argued that fascist threats are growing in the United States.

Cecele Carter, a history teacher from San Jose, carried a sign at the San Francisco Civic Center with pictures from Nazi Germany and a decades-old Ku Klux Klan rally. "I tell my students if they aren't interested in history and learn its lessons, they are doomed to repeat it," she told the *Militant*.

The antifa thugs didn't try to differentiate between Trump supporters, supposed white supremacists looking to debate politics, journalists, or any

others they chose to target — like one person wearing a T-shirt with a picture of Greek philosopher Socrates. Their goal was to limit and overshadow the outpouring against racism that motivated most in the weekend crowds. A majority of those this reporter spoke to opposed the antifa attacks, and many said they resented how these physical threats and attacks led to many leaving the park. "They are a distraction from the message today of protesting racism," said Bill Gregory, a veteran of social protests in the area.

"Obviously I am not a Klansman," Jordan Davis, 25, who carried a pro-Donald Trump banner in Berkeley, told the *Chronicle*. "They are trying to lump Trump supporters in with a group that is pretty much nonexistent."

Dennis Richter, organizer of the Los Angeles Socialist Workers Party, joined the actions on both days. He intervened in Berkeley with a few other protesters to halt an antifa attack on a man not far from a Socialist Workers literature table.

"They claim to be against fascism, but these attacks on individuals who you don't agree with are in fact stock and trade of fascists. These methods of attempting to shut down civil discourse are alien to the working class," Richter said. "They echo the liberal Democrats and media who blame workers for the election of Donald Trump, saying it reflects a rise in racism among Caucasian workers.

"This is false," Richter said. "Our party discusses politics with workers at their homes all over this country. There is less racism now than anytime in U.S. history."

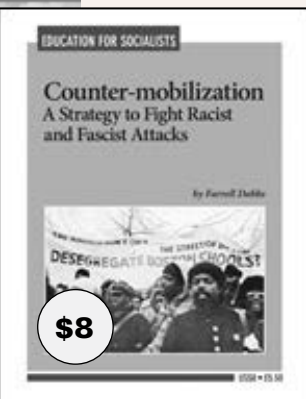
Immediately following the actions, Berkeley Mayor Arreguin urged the University of California there to cancel a conservative campus group's plans for a "Free Speech Week" in September.

## More reading ...

*"Unionism and politics cannot be separated. Power generated at the trade-union level can be shattered by government blows. Workers must enter the political arena as an independent class force, with their own party."*

— Farrell Dobbs

### TEAMSTER POLITICS



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# Social catastrophe in Texas

Continued from front page

news reported, because the area had not flooded in the past. At 9 a.m. Aug. 26, the owner sent her daughter the photo. The daughter's husband then tweeted it with the message, "Need help asap emergency services."

Some four hours later, the National Guard rescued 15 people there by helicopter. Rockport, Texas, where the Category 4 hurricane first made landfall, suffered extensive damage, mostly from the high winds. About 40 percent of the 24,500 people who live there and in Aransas County didn't respond to a mandatory evacuation order.

Many remember their experiences in 2005, when an unprepared and unorganized mandatory evacuation order that left everyone on their own to flee in face of Hurricane Rita led to a giant traffic jam and more deaths there than from the storm.

The more than 10,000 who left have not been told when they can return. Referring to those who stayed and whose homes are damaged, county official C.H. Mills Jr. told the *Texas Tribune*, "We can't take care of them."

Christina Tucker, 30, a Rockford waitress, went to a school that had been converted into a shelter Aug. 25 as the storm battered the town. But nobody was in charge. Tucker organized with others to create a sign-in sheet, assign cots and prepare meals. It wasn't until the next day, with 129 people checked in, that government medical workers and other officials showed up.

## Working people left on their own

Working people from Houston and around the region and others took into their own hands organizing to rescue people using whatever they had at hand — water skis, kayaks, canoes and motor boats — in the face of government inaction.

In Port Arthur, "more than 100 local guys got in their boats and monster trucks and went out looking for people to help," Stephanie Lee, a retail store manager there, said by phone. "The government had nothing to do with it."

"One of my wife's relatives spent 12 hours floating on an air mattress waiting for help," Randy Warren, 66,

a Houston retail worker, told the *Militant* by phone. After weathering the first part of the storm, Warren had to abandon his house because county officials were getting ready to release water from the overfilled Addicks Reservoir. "It could be weeks before we can come back," he said.

## Flooding was no surprise

This is Houston's third so-called 500-year flood in three years. But the way the "experts" define flooding has little to do with how frequently a flood can be expected to hit or how bad.

In reality the designation is used to avoid stricter building regulations that lower profits for capitalist developers. It also lowers insurance liability for areas outside "high-risk" flood zones. Buildings there must be constructed 12 inches above 100-year flood levels. That rule doesn't apply in the less restrictive zones.

By claiming that the larger storms are unusual or once in a lifetime, government officials can wash their hands of responsibility for not taking stronger measures. Those measures are no mystery.

Houston's drainage systems were built in the early 1900s and only meant to withstand a "10-year" flood. City officials are now working to widen the channels — a little — to handle a "25-year-flood." For the capitalists, further lowering the risk to lives of city residents would not be "cost effective."

The ruling capitalist families weigh the costs of adequate protection against the odds — and costs — of catastrophe, and choose what eats into their profits the least.

A construction boom over the last two decades has wiped out 38,000 acres of wetlands that act like sponges for excess water. The only reason to not develop and maintain wetlands is profits for capitalist developers.

No wonder that *Business Insider* headlined an article, "Houston Was a Ticking Time-Bomb for a Devastating Hurricane like Harvey."

As of Aug. 28 nearly 300,000 people were still without electricity. The Houston convention center is overfull with people who lost their housing,

## Afghan refugees protest deportations in Sweden



Christine Olsson

STOCKHOLM — Hundreds of young Afghan asylum-seekers and their supporters have held daily sit-ins at Medborgarplatsen Square here demanding, "Stop the deportations to Afghanistan." Above, Aug. 9 action. Organized by Ung i Sverige (Young in Sweden), the protests began Aug. 6 to oppose the Swedish government's stance that it is now safe to deport refugees to large parts of Afghanistan. Some 1,000 people rallied Aug. 19. A hundred rightists held a counterprotest, chanting "No Afghans on our streets" and "Out with the scum."

The Afghan youth sent an open letter to Swedish Migration Agency Director General Mikael Ribbenvik saying, "Is Sweden really a moral country when you tell Swedes not to travel to Afghanistan because it's dangerous, but you think it's safe for us young people to live there? It's not human."

Many of the refugees are unaccompanied minors, who are protected from deportation by a United Nations convention. More than 23,000 minors arrived in 2015 alone, fleeing the devastation of the 16-year-long war. Some come directly from Afghanistan. Most are sent to Sweden by their families who first fled to Iran or Pakistan. One participant told the *Militant* that in Iran they often face the choice of deportation or joining the Iranian military.

A third of the 12,168 Afghans' requests for asylum, processed in 2016, were immediately rejected. The Swedish Migration Agency has decided to assume that those without documents who say they're under 18 are lying and have started to conduct physical tests to attempt to determine their age. Those ruled to be adults are subject to deportation.

One protester, who did not wish to give his name, told the *Militant* that when his cousin was deported, he was dropped off in Kabul by Swedish cops. He had never been in Kabul in his life and knew no one.

— LARS ERLANDSSON

and city officials are working to open new locations.

As of Aug. 31, government officials say at least 38 are dead. But many homes and vehicles are still under water and many people are missing.

Rockport officials say that 30 to 40 of those who called at the peak of the storm are still unaccounted for because crews "didn't make it to everybody they wanted to get to."

CBS News estimates that as many as 200,000 homes have been damaged by high winds or flooding. As of Aug. 31 more than 10,000 people had taken refuge at the George R. Brown Convention Center, double its capacity.

Many arrived there to find no cots available to sleep on. "Houston wasn't prepared. The government wasn't prepared. The mayor wasn't prepared," Michelle Lavan told CBS News from inside the center Aug. 29. What did she and her family sleep on? "Deflated air mattresses. Cardboard boxes," she said.

The Bowers Civic Center in Port Arthur was set as the city's emergency shelter. Virtually every single one of the 20,000 homes in the city is flooded. But the center itself flooded Aug. 29, leaving refugees huddled in the bleachers.

And many people are still trapped in their homes, unable to make it out.

"I spoke to Maria, a friend of mine who lives on the southwest side of Houston," Amanda Ulman told the *Militant* Aug. 29. "There is a shelter just a couple of blocks away, but they can't get there

because the water is too high. They're hoping the water doesn't rise any more."

## Example of revolutionary Cuba

The disorganization, lack of planning and elevating of profits above human lives by U.S. officials and businesses stands in stark contrast to the way the workers and farmers government of Cuba faces hurricanes.

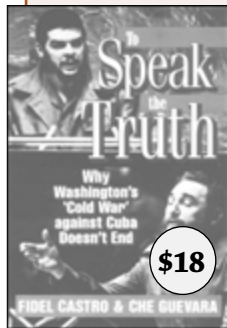
Every year mass organizations in revolutionary Cuba practice what to do in the face of major storms. Last year as soon as it was known that Hurricane Matthew was heading toward the island, Cuban President Raúl Castro toured Guantánamo province. He participated in a meeting of the Provincial Civil Defense Council, which oversees disaster preparedness. Castro and the council set up a camp nearby to lead the effort to protect the population and minimize economic losses.

Brigades of electrical workers and soldiers headed to the region before the hurricane hit so they could begin repairs as soon as the storm was over. Medicine and food was sent to shelters before the storm landed. More than 1 million residents were evacuated.

This was possible because Cuban working people made a revolution in 1959, ousting the Washington-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista, and taking their destiny into their own hands.

Cindy Jaquith and Steve Warshell in Miami contributed to this article.

## Emulate example of Cuban Revolution



### To Speak the Truth: Why Washington's 'Cold War' Against Cuba Doesn't End

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In speeches before UN bodies, Castro and Guevara address the peoples of the world, explaining why Washington fears the example of the socialist revolution and why its effort to destroy it will fail.

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# Disaster shows need for workers power

*The following statement was issued Aug. 31, by Cynthia Jaquith, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Miami.*

The catastrophic *social disaster* unfolding in Houston — the fifth-largest metropolitan area in the U.S. — and surrounding areas in Texas and Louisiana is not simply the result of massive rainfall and what the media likes to call a “500-year flood.” It is a direct product of the natural workings of the capitalist system, the dictatorship of capital.

The rulers — from Washington to Austin to Houston City Hall — made no plans to mobilize the forces needed to safely and quickly evacuate the tens of thousands who knew they would face life-threatening conditions in an area that’s a frequent target of hurricanes. In fact, there have been *three* “500-year floods” there in the last three years.

Terms like “100-year” and “500-year” floods were invented by government meritocrats and insurance bean counters to mask coldly calculated cost-benefit-risk assessments aimed at minimizing workers’ coverage and justifying the misery of millions. Similar calculations are used to justify the preparations the rulers make — or, more often, don’t make — to offer some protection for working people in the event of natural disasters.

A recent article in *Business Insider* described Houston as a “ticking time-bomb.” Developers out to stuff their bank accounts through their construction “boom” and their backers in the government laid the groundwork for greater flooding by systematically paving over wetlands and blocking drainage systems key in heavy rains.

As waters rose, the rulers’ message to the citizens of Houston was, “You’re on your own.”

Despite the indifference of the authorities, and all

the obstacles thrown in their way by police and bureaucrats, thousands of working people responded with selfless human solidarity, forming our own navy to rescue people and pets alike in every part of the city. Workers trapped for days in the Bolillo Mexican bakery made sheet after sheet of pan dulce and delivered it by jeep to workers in need of food. Even the *New York Times* had to admit, “The working class, in large part, is being saved by the working class.”

Cuban workers and farmers who live in hurricane alley do not experience social disasters when hurricanes strike. Cuban working people carried out a socialist revolution in 1959, transforming the workers and farmers who did so, forging their own government, expropriating U.S.-imperialist holdings and those of Cuba’s capitalist exploiters, and running society in the interest of human solidarity, not private profit. Thousands of volunteers, backed by the resources of their government and its communist leadership, are in place to carry out any needed evacuation and begin immediate reconstruction of destroyed homes and public facilities. The capitalist property “insurance” racket doesn’t exist there, because it is not needed.

The Socialist Workers Party is dedicated to emulating the Cuban example, helping to lead workers and the oppressed here to make our own revolution on U.S. soil and join the worldwide struggle for socialism.

The SWP demands: Mobilize the necessary federal, state and municipal resources to provide immediate free emergency medical care, food, shelter, clothes and fuel to all those affected by Hurricane Harvey!

Put millions of unemployed in Texas and beyond to work at union-scale wages in an emergency government-funded public works program to rebuild the Houston area infrastructure, put up new housing and build “500-year” flood prevention!

## White House steps up US war in Afghanistan

**Continued from front page**

The move also reflects the weakened position of U.S. imperialism since the fall of the Stalinist regimes in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the 1990s. For decades Washington had relied on the Stalinist misleaders to block revolutionary struggles by working people around the world.

Trump’s decision to hold the line on U.S. military intervention in Afghanistan reverses his “original instinct,” which “was to pull out,” he said in his speech. In so doing he now owns the war.

The weak Afghan government, cobbled together by Washington and propped up by its firepower, would be easily overthrown by the Taliban if U.S. forces pulled out, Trump said. The reactionary Islamist organization, which ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001 with many of its leaders coming from forces Washington backed to challenge Soviet rule there in the 1980s, has retaken control of almost 40 percent of the country.

The Trump administration’s Afghan war plans are consistent with previous administrations. The goal? Not to lose.

“It’s the same forever war,” Doug Ollivant, a fellow at the New America Foundation and former U.S. Army officer, told the *Washington Post*.

It involves a few thousand more troops, stepped-up bombings, more pressure on the Pakistani rulers to back off support for the Taliban and additional pressure on Kabul to tackle endemic corruption.

A side benefit, Trump said, will be “obliterating ISIS [Islamic State]” and “crushing al-Qaeda” forces there.

“We see this as a long-term campaign,” an unidentified U.S. military official in Kabul told the *Post*. By investing in the war, he said, the administration “and its NATO allies will be able to chart a way forward well into the 2020s,” the paper reported.

“This entire effort is intended to put pressure on the Taliban to have them understand: you will not win a battlefield victory,” Secretary of State Rex Tillerson told a State Department briefing the day after Trump’s speech. “We may not win one, but neither will you. At some point, we have to come to the negotiating table

and find the way to bring this to an end.”

President Trump tried to differentiate his war policy from that of the Barack Obama administration. “I share the American people’s frustration. I also share their frustration over a foreign policy that has spent too much time, energy, money — and, most importantly lives — trying to rebuild countries in our own image instead of pursuing our security interests above all other considerations,” he said.

But despite the rhetoric, the Trump administration’s plan amounts to no more than tweaking the policy of the Obama administration.

### Washington’s murderous war

Six days before Trump’s announcement the Taliban issued an open letter to Washington declaring that the military situation facing the imperialist forces in Afghanistan is “far worse than you realize.”

“Previous experiences have shown that sending more troops to Afghanistan will not result in anything other than further destruction of American military and economic might,” the Taliban said.

Afghanistan’s 33 million people, 90 percent who are Sunni Muslim, are among the poorest in the world. Few steps have been taken to advance modern infrastructure and capitalist development. Illiteracy is 60 percent and life expectancy is 51 years. Three-quarters of the population live in the countryside. Less than 50 percent have access to electricity.

Despite being landlocked, Afghanistan’s location is strategic. Washington and its capitalist competitors in the region are looking to control the development of oil and gas pipelines linking Central with South Asia. To advance their interests in the region, both Tehran and Moscow are deepening ties with different factions of the Taliban.

Since the war started in 2001 more than 110,000 Afghan civilians and soldiers have been killed along with over 2,400 U.S. soldiers and 1,000 from the 38 other NATO countries that have troops there. Civilian war deaths have been rising steadily from about 2,750 in 2012 to 3,500 last year according to the United Nations.

## SWP: Join protests!

**Continued from page 6**

in Afghanistan. “On a world scale U.S. imperialism remains the world’s strongest military power, but we see it’s being forced to retreat,” said Richter. “The U.S. rulers have been unable to win a war since the first Gulf War in 1991. Trump has no strategy to win a war in Afghanistan. The propertied rulers are trying to come up with a strategy of how not to *lose* the war.

“It’s the working class who are the soldiers who are the cannon fodder. The response to their deaths and maiming will lead to protests, and their families and young people will be part of them, much like those turning out across the country at these anti-racist protests,” Richter said. “Trump’s no more a war monger than Hillary Clinton, actually less. He inherited this. He’s doing what any chief executive of the U.S. imperialist government would have to do.”

Richter hailed the not guilty verdicts for Richard Lovelien, Steven Stewart, Eric Parker and Scott Drexler, who faced frame-up charges for going to the ranch of Cliven Bundy in Nevada to join the fight against the government’s seizure of Bundy’s cattle after he refused to pay federal grazing fees. Two were acquitted and the other two acquitted on most charges.

“The government owns over 80 percent of the land in Nevada. The Bundy’s have been ranching there for 100 years,” said Richter, who had attended the first day of the Las Vegas trial in solidarity with Bundy and all the defendants. “Other ranchers have been driven off the land by the federal government, but the Bundys have refused. Hundreds of people stood with them in defense of their grazing rights.”

During a lively discussion period one participant said he disagreed with Richter. “I take issue that there is no rise in white supremacy,” he said. Another said he thought the Bundy family was racist.

“How do you explain that no other political organizations on the left are interested in the Bundy fight other than the Socialist Workers Party?” another asked.

“We went to talk to workers at their homes in a neighborhood of Latinos, Blacks and Caucasians in Las Vegas. They knew about the restrictions ranchers face from all the agencies of the federal government today. The ranchers call it ‘federal overreach’ when the government prevents you from making a living off the land,” Richter said. “There’s an identification there that’s deep by workers who face all kinds of red tape, taxes and tickets from local, state and federal governments. They appreciated information about the ongoing trial in Las Vegas and expressed support for the defendants. Workers and farmers need to organize together against the dictatorship of capital.”

Mary Martin detailed her experience covering the Portland, Oregon, frame-up trial against the occupiers at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in 2016. Bundy’s sons Ammon and Ryan and others were acquitted there. “The jury didn’t buy the government’s version,” she said.

When supporters of the Bundys came out of the courthouse in Portland, a Black Lives Matter march was passing by. John Lamb, a chicken farmer from Montana, joined their march. Some of the participants tried to stop him, saying, “If you support the Bundys, you are a white supremacist!” Martin said.

“Lamb said, ‘No, I am not,’” Martin said. “We have people of many races in our group, including African-Americans and Native Americans. I’m against what the government and police are doing to Black people just like I’m against what they are doing to the ranchers and the Bundys. He was welcomed in the protest.”

Richter invited those at the forum to join the SWP in continuing to speak out and march against racism, and in going with party members to discuss politics with workers on their doorsteps.

“Race is controversial. We are all workers,” Ysenia Gavila, a 21-year-old receptionist at a fitness center, said in the informal discussion after the meeting. “The common ground we all have is that we’re all workers in whatever industry we work in.”

“I do like how everyone here is organized,” said Brian Chavez, 22, a member of the Glazier’s Union. “The SWP has a good way to get people together.”

Norton Sandler from the Oakland SWP, who chaired the meeting, made a fund presentation that netted \$1,150. Sandler thanked those in the room who had housed 25 participants from out of town over the weekend and who had cooked the fine meal that was enjoyed before the program.